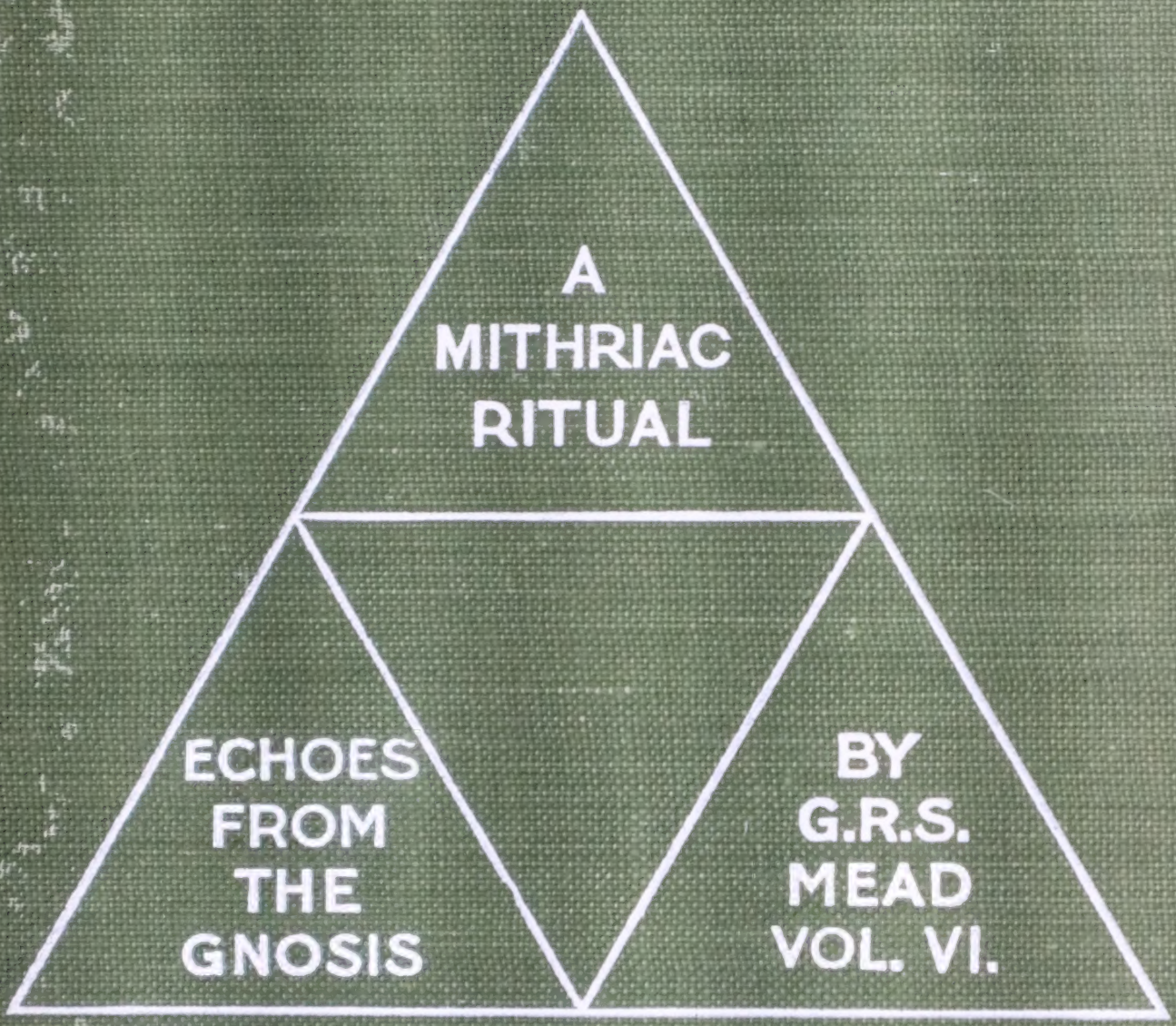

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ECHOES
FROM
THE
GNOSIS

BY
G. R. S.
MEAD
VOL. VI.

A MITHRIAC RITUAL

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ECHOES FROM THE GNOSIS.

Under this general title is now being published a series of small volumes, drawn from, or based upon, the mystic, theosophic and gnostic writings of the ancients, so as to make more easily audible for the ever-widening circle of those who love such things, some echoes of the mystic experiences and initiatory lore of their spiritual ancestry. There are many who love the life of the spirit, and who long for the light of gnostic illumination, but who are not sufficiently equipped to study the writings of the ancients at first hand, or to follow unaided the labours of scholars. These little volumes are therefore intended to serve as introduction to the study of the more difficult literature of the subject; and it is hoped that at the same time they may become for some, who have, as yet, not even heard of the Gnosis, stepping-stones to higher things.

G. R. S. M.

A MITHRIAC RITUAL.

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Text: Dieterich (A.), *Eine Mithrasliturgie* (Leipzig, 1903).

ECHOES FROM THE GNOSIS

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VOL. II. THE HYMNS OF HERMES.
VOL. III. THE VISION OF ARIDÆUS.
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VOL. V. THE MYSTERIES OF MITHRA.
VOL. VI. A MITHRIAC RITUAL.

SOME PROPOSED SUBJECTS FOR FORTHCOMING VOLUMES

THE GNOSTIC CRUCIFIXION.
THE CHALDÆAN ORACLES.
THE HYMN OF THE PRODIGAL.
SOME ORPHIC FRAGMENTS.

A MITHRIAC RITUAL.

PREAMBLE.

The last little volume gave the reader a brief outline of what is known of the cult of Mithra and the spread of the Mithriac Mysteries in the Western world. We have now to deal with a Mithriac Ritual of the most instructive and intensely interesting character, which introduces us to the innermost rite of the carefully guarded secrets of the Mithriaca.

This Ritual is all the more precious in that our knowledge of the Liturgies of the ancient Pagan cults of the West is of the scantiest nature. A few fragments only remain, mostly in the form of hymns; whereas the Ritual before us is complete, and the only complete one so far discovered. Dieterich calls it a

Liturgy; but a Liturgy is a service in which several take part, whereas it is plain that our Ritual was a secret and solemn inner rite for one person only.

The credit of unearthing it from the obscurity in which it was buried, and of conclusively demonstrating its parentage, is due to Dieterich; for though Cumont in his great work quotes several passages from the unrevised text, he does so only to reject it as a genuine Mithriac document.

It is dug out of the chaos of the great Paris Magic Papyrus 574 (*Supplément grec de la Bibliothèque nationale*), the date of which is fixed with every probability as the earliest years of the fourth century A.D. The original text of the Ritual has, however, been plainly worked over by a school of Egyptian magicians, who inserted most of the now unintelligible words and names (*ἄσημα ὀνόματα, nomina barbara, nomina arcana*), and vowel-combinations and permutations (*voces*

mysticæ), of their theurgic language, which were known in Egypt as "words of power."

The subject is naturally one of the most obscure that is known to scholarship, and so far no one has thrown any real light on it. That, however, there was once in Egypt and Chaldæa a science of this "nature language," or "tongue of the gods," which subsequently passed into the superstition of a purely mechanical tradition, is highly probable; and one means towards a recovery of the understanding of its nature is a study of the still living tradition of *mantra-vidyā*, or the science of *mantrāḥ*, or mystic utterances and invocations, in India of to-day.

When these evidently later insertions are removed, there still remains a certain number of *nomina arcana* and *mysticæ voces* which cannot be removed without doing violence to the text. It, therefore, follows that these stand as part of the Ritual. Did they, however, form part

of the *original* Ritual? The original Ritual must have contained, one would have imagined, Persian names. But the distinguished scholar Bartholomae, whom Dieterich has called in to his assistance, declares that nothing Persian can be made out of them without violent changes of the letters. But why, it might be asked, should not the original Persian Ritual have contained *nomina arcana* taken over from Chaldæa? However this may be, our Greek Ritual evidently contained certain names and words "of power," before it reached the hands of the Egyptian magical school who inserted the majority of the māntric formulæ in our present text.

The latter are, of course, entirely eliminated from the translation, while the former are marked by obeli.

On the whole the most likely supposition is that we have before us (when the latter insertions are removed) a Ritual translated or paraphrased into Greek, and adapted for use in Egypt,

and that, too, for picked members of the most esoteric circles. For our Ritual is not for the initiation of a neophyte of the lower grades, but for a candidate who is to self-initiate himself in the solitary mystery of apotheosis, whereby he became a true " Father " of the inmost rites, one possessing face to face knowledge and gnosis.

Dieterich thinks that this Greek ritual was first made in Egypt about 100-150 A.D., and was used in the Mysteries until 200 A.D. It was then that it got into the hands of the magical school, and was included, together with many other pieces, some of them similarly treated, in a collection which was copied on the papyrus which we now possess, about 300 A.D.

It is exceedingly probable, therefore, that we have in this Ritual of initiation certain theurgic practices of Egyptian tradition combined with the traditional Mithriac invocations done into Greek.

As to the chanting of the vowels, it is

of interest to learn from Demetrius, *On Interpretation*, c. 71 (p. 20 Raderm.), that :

"In Egypt the priests hymn the Gods by means of the seven vowels, chanting them in order ; instead of the pipe and lute the musical chanting of these letters is heard. So that if you were to take away this accompaniment you would simply remove the whole melody and music of the utterance (*logos*)."

The statement of Nicomachus of Gerasa, the "musician" and mystic (second century A.D.), is still clearer ; for he not only tells us about the vowels and consonants, but also of certain other "unarticulated" sounds which were used by the theurgists, and which are directed to be used in the rubrics of our Ritual. In speaking of the vowels or "sounding letters"—each of the seven spheres being said to give forth a different vowel or nature-tone—Nicomachus (c. 6) informs us that these root-sounds in nature are combined with certain material elements, as they are in spoken speech with the

consonants; but "just as the soul with the body, and music with the lyre-strings, the one produces living creatures and the other musical modes and tunes, so do those root-sounds give birth to certain energic and initiatory powers of divine operations. It is because of this that whenever theurgists are awe-struck in any such operation, they make invocation symbolically by means of 'hissings' and 'poppings' and un-articulated and discordant sounds."

The exact translation of the Greek terms, *συριγμὸς* and *ποππυσμός*, is somewhat of a difficulty. The first denotes a shrill piping sound or hissing, the Latin *stridor*. It is used of such different sounds as the rattling of ropes, the trumpeting of elephants and a singing in the ears. The second is used of a clicking or clucking with the lips and tongue, and of the whistling, cheeping, chirruping, warbling or trilling of birds. It is used of the smack of a loud kiss and also of the cry "hush." Both Aristophanes and Pliny

tell us that it was used as a protection against, or rather a reverent greeting of, lightning ; and the latter adds that this was a universal custom.

The English " pop " perhaps represents the idea of the Greek most nearly. In the Ritual, however, I have rendered it by " puff " as it is connected with breath.

It is evident that we have here to do with certain nature-sounds, which have disappeared from articulate speech, except in some primitive languages such as the " clicking " of the Zulus. It pertains to the art of *onomatopoiía* or *onomatopoiēsis*, or the forming of words expressive of natural sounds. The root-idea seems to be that in mystic operations designed to bring man in touch with the hidden powers of nature, the language of nature must be employed.

As we have said, the Ritual before us is not of the nature of a church or temple service ; on the contrary, it contains directions for a solitary sacrament, in which the whole effort of the celebrant

is to stir into activity, and bring into conscious operation, his own hidden nature or the root-substance of his being. It is a *yoga*-rite (*unio mystica*), or act for union, in which the physical breath, the etheric currents, and the psychic auræ, or life-breaths, or *prāṇa's*, work together with the inbreathing of the Great Breath, or Holy Spirit, or Ātmic Energy.

It should therefore prove of very great interest to many who have of late heard much concerning *yoga*, both in its higher contemplative modes, and also in its modes of deep and psychic breathing (*haṭha-yoga*); for it may be news to many that in the ancient West, especially in Egypt, there was a high art of this selfsame *yoga* which has been developed so elaborately in India.

We will now give a translation of the Ritual and then proceed to comment on it. The prayers and utterances are printed in italics, and the rubrics or instructions in Roman type.

THE RITUAL.

I.

[THE FATHER'S PRAYER.]

A MITHRIAC RITUAL.

O Providence, O Fortune, bestow on me Thy Grace—imparting these the Mysteries a Father only may hand on, and that, too, to a Son alone—his Immortality—[a Son] initiate, worthy of this our Craft, with which Sun Mithras, the Great God, commanded me to be endowed by His Archangel; so that I, Eagle [as I am, by mine own self] alone, may soar to Heaven, and contemplate all things.

II.

THE INVOCATORY UTTERANCE (LOGOS).

1. *O Primal Origin of my origination; Thou Primal Substance of my substance;*

First Breath of breath, the breath that is in me; First Fire, God-given for the Blending of the blendings in me, [First Fire] of fire in me; First Water of [my] water, the water in me; Primal Earth-essence of the earthy essence in me; Thou Perfect Body of me—N. N., son of N. N. (fem.)—*fashioned by Honoured Arm and Incorruptible Right Hand, in World that's lightless, yet radiant with Light, [in World] that's soulless, yet filled full of Soul!*

2. *If, verily, it may seem good to you, translate me, now held by my lower nature, unto the Generation that is free from Death; in order that, beyond the insistent Need that presses on me, I may have Vision of the Deathless Source, by virtue of the Deathless Spirit, by virtue of the Deathless Water, by virtue of the [Deathless] Solid, and [by virtue of] the [Deathless] Air; in order that I may become re-born in Mind; in order that I may become initiate, and that the Holy Breath may breathe in me; in order that I may admire the Holy Fire; that I may see the Deep*

of the [New] Dawn, the Water that doth cause [the Soul] to thrill; and that the Life-bestowing Æther which surrounds [all things] may give me Hearing.

3. *For I am to behold to-day with Deathless Eyes—I, mortal, born of mortal womb, but [now] made better by the Might of Mighty Power, yea, by the Incorruptible Right Hand—[I am to see to-day] by virtue of the Deathless Spirit the Deathless Æon, the Master of the Diadems of Fire—I with pure purities [now] purified, the human soul-power of me subsisting for a little while in purity; which [power] I shall again receive transmitted unto me beyond the insistent Bitterness that presses on me, Necessity whose debts can never go unpaid*—I, N. N., son of N. N. (fem.)—*according to the Ordinance of God that naught can ever change.*

4. *For that it is beyond my reach that, born beneath the sway of Death, I should [unaided] soar into the Height, together with the golden sparklings of the Brilliancy that knows no Death.*

5. *Stay still, O nature doomed to perish, [nature] of men subject to Death! And straightway let me pass beyond the Need implacable that presses on me; for that I am His Son; I breathe; I am!*

III.

[THE FIRST INSTRUCTION.]

1. Take from the [Sun-]rays breath, inhaling thrice [as deepiy] as thou canst; and thou shalt see thyself being raised aloft, and soaring towards the Height, so that thou seem'st to be in midst of Air.

2. Thou shalt hear naught, nor man nor beast; nor shalt thou see aught of the sights upon the earth, in that same hour; but all things thou shalt see will be immortal.

3. For thou shalt see, in that same day and hour, the Disposition of the Gods—the Ruling Gods ascending heavenwards. the other ones descending.

And through his Disk—the God's, my Father's—there shall be seen the Way-of-going of the Gods accessible to sight.

4. And in like fashion also [shall be seen] the Pipe, as it is called, whence comes the Wind in service [for the day].

For thou shalt see as though it were a Pipe depending from His Disk; and toward the regions Westward, as though it were an infinite East Wind. But if the other Wind, toward the regions of the East, should be in service, in the like fashion shalt thou see, toward the regions of that [side,] the converse of the sight.

5. And thou shalt see the Gods gazing intently on thee and bearing down upon thee.

Then straightway lay thy dexter finger on thy lips and say:

IV.

[THE FIRST UTTERANCE.]

O Silence! Silence! Silence!

The Symbol of the Living God beyond Decay.

Protect me, Silence! ☩ *!*

Next "hiss" forth long: $\bar{S}$ *!* $\bar{S}$ *!*

Then "puff" saying: ☩ *!*

And thereon shalt thou see the Gods gazing benignly on thee, and no longer bearing down upon thee, but proceeding on the proper order of their doings.

V.

[THE SECOND INSTRUCTION.]

When, then, thou see'st the Upper Cosmos clean and clear, with no one of the Gods (or Angels) bearing down on thee, expect to hear a mighty thunder-clap so as to startle thee.

Then say again:

VI.

THE [SECOND] UTTERANCE (LOGOS).

A MITHRIAC RITUAL.

1. *O Silence! Silence!*
I am a Star, whose Course is as your Course, shining anew from out the Depth ƒ.

Upon thy saying this, straightway His Disk will start expanding.

2. And after thou hast said the second utterance—to wit, twice *Silence* and the rest—"hiss" twice, and "puff" twice; and straightway shalt thou see a mighty host of stars, five-pointed, emerging from His Disk, and filling all the Air.

3. Then say again:

O Silence! Silence!

And when His Disk is opened [fully] out, thou shalt behold an infinite Encircling and Doors of Fire fast closed.

Straightway set going then the utterance that follows, closing thy eyes:

VII.

THE THIRD UTTERANCE (LOGOS).

1. *Hear me, give ear to me*—N. N., son of N. N. (fem.)—*O Lord, who with Thy Breath hast closed the Fiery Bars of Heaven; Twin-bodied; Ruler of the Fire; Creator of the Light; O Holder of the Keys; Inbreather of the Fire; Fire-hearted One, whose Breath gives Light; Thou who dost joy in Fire; Beauteous of Light; O Lord of Light, whose Body is of Fire; Light-giver* [*and*] *Fire-sower; Fire-loosener, whose Life is in the Light; Fire-whirler, who sett'st the Light in motion; Thou Thunder-rouser; O Thou Light-glory, Light-increaser; Controller of the Light Empyrean; O Thou Star-tamer!*

2. *Oh! Open unto me! For on account of this, the bitter and implacable Necessity that presses on me, I do invoke Thy Deathless Names, innate with Life, most worshipful, that have not yet descended*

unto mortal nature, nor have been made articulate by human tongue, or cry or tone of man :

Eeō · oēeō · iōō · oē · ēcō · ēeō · oēeō · iōō · oēēe · ōēe · ōoē · iē · ēō · oō · oē · ieō · oē · ōoē · ieōoē · iceō · eē · iō · oē · ioē · ōēō · coē · oeō · ōiē · ōiēeō · oi · iii · ēoē · ōuē · ēō · oēe · cōēia · aēaeēa · ēeeē · ceē · eeē · ieō · ēeō · oēeeoē · ēeō · euō · oē · eiō · ēō · ōē · ōē · ōē · ee · ooouiōē !

3. Utter all these with Fire and Spirit once unto the end ; and then begin again a second time, until thou hast completed [all] the Seven Immortal Gods of Cosmos.

When thou hast uttered them, thunders and crashings shalt thou hear in the Surround, and feel thyself a-shake with every crash.

Then once more utter *Silence !* [and] the utterance [following it].

4. Thereon open thy eyes ; and thou shalt see the Doors thrown open, and the Cosmos of the Gods that is within the

Doors; so that for joy and rapture of the sight thy Spirit runs to meet it, and soars up.

Therefore, hold thyself steady, and, gazing steadily into thyself, draw breath from the Divine.

When, then, thy Soul shall be restored, say:

VIII.

[THE FOURTH UTTERANCE.]

1. *Draw nigh, O Lord!*

Upon this utterance His Rays shall be turned on thee, and thou shalt be in midst of them.

2. When, then, thou hast done this, thou shalt behold a God, in flower of age, of fairest beauty, [and] with Locks of Flame, in a white Tunic and a scarlet Mantle, wearing a Crown of Fire.

Straightway salute Him with the Salutation of the Fire:

IX.

[THE FIFTH UTTERANCE.]

A MITHRIAC RITUAL.

1. *Hail Lord! O Thou of mighty Power; O King of mighty Sway; Greatest of Gods; O Sun; Thou Lord of Heaven and Earth; O God of Gods! Strong is Thy Breath; strong is Thy Might!*

O Lord, if it seem good to Thee, make Thou announcement of me unto God Most-high, who hath begotten and created Thee!

2. *For that a man*—I, N.N., son of N.N. (fem.), *born of the mortal womb* of N.N. (fem.), *and of spermatic ichōr, yea, of this* [*ichōr*], *which at Thy Hands to-day hath undergone the transmutation of re-birth*—, *one, from so many tens of thousands, transformed to immortality in this same hour, by God's good-pleasure, of God transcendent Good*—, [*a man, I say,*] *presumes to worship Thee, and supplicates with whatsoever power a mortal hath.*

3. Upon this utterance He shall come to the Pole, and thou shalt see Him moving round as on a path.

Then gaze intently, and send forth a prolonged "bellowing," like to a horn-note, expelling the whole breath, with pressure on the ribs, and kiss the amulets, and say first to that upon the right :

X.

[THE SIXTH UTTERANCE.]

Protect me ! ϯ !

When thou hast uttered this, thou shalt behold the Doors thrown open, and, issuing from the Depth, Seven Virgins, in byssus-robes, with serpent-faces, and golden sceptres in their hands. These are they who are the so-called Heaven's Fortunes (*Tychai*).

When thou dost see these things, make salutation thus :

XI.

[THE SEVENTH UTTERANCE.]

A MITHRIAC RITUAL.

1. *Hail Heaven's Seven Fortunes, Virgins august and good, ye sacred ones who live and eat with ✝! Ye holiest Protectors of the Four Supports!*

Hail thou, the First, ✝!
Hail thou, the Second, ✝!
Hail thou, the Third, ✝!
Hail thou, the Fourth, ✝!
Hail thou, the Fifth, ✝!
Hail thou, the Sixth, ✝!
Hail thou, the Seventh, ✝!

2. There come forth others, too—Seven Gods, with faces of black bulls, in linen loin-cloths, with seven golden fillets on their heads. These are the so-called Heaven's Pole-lords.

And in like fashion unto each of them thou must make salutation with his special name.

XII.

[THE EIGHTH UTTERANCE.]

1. *Hail Guardians of the Pivot, ye sacred sturdy Youths, who all, at once, revolve the spinning Axis of Heaven's Circle, ye who let loose the thunder and the lightning, and earthquake-shocks and thunder-bolts upon the hosts of impious folk, but [who bestow] on me, who pious am and worshipper of God, good-health, and soundness of my frame in every part, and proper stretch of hearing and of sight, and calm, in the now present good-hours of this day, O mighty Ruling Lords and Gods of me!*

Hail thou, the First, ✝*!*
Hail thou, the Second, ✝*!*
Hail thou, the Third, ✝*!*
Hail thou, the Fourth, ✝*!*
Hail thou, the Fifth, ✝*!*
Hail thou, the Sixth, ✝*!*
Hail thou, the Seventh, ✝*!*

2. Now when they [all] are present in their order, here and there, gaze in the Air intently, and thou shalt see lightnings down-flashing, and lights a-quiver, and the earth a-shake; and [then] a God descending, [a God] transcending vast, of radiant Presence, with golden Locks, in flower of age, [clad] in a Robe of brightness, with Crown of gold [upon His Head], and Garments [on His Legs], holding in His Right Hand the golden Shoulder of the Calf.

This latter is the Bear that moves the Heaven[-dome], and changes its direction, now up now down, according to the hour.

Then shalt thou see lightnings leap from His Eyes and from His Body stars.

3. Straightway send forth a "bellowing" prolonged, with belly-pressure, to start thy senses going all together—prolonged unto the very end, kissing again the amulets and saying:

XIII.

[THE NINTH UTTERANCE.]

ϱ, [O Lord] of me—N. N.—*abide with me, within my Soul! Oh! leave me not! For ϱ bids thee [remain].*

And gaze intently on the God, with "bellowing" prolonged, and thus salute Him:

XIV.

[THE TENTH UTTERANCE.]

Hail Lord, Thou Master of the Water! Hail, Founder of the Earth! Hail, Prince of Breath!

O Lord, being born again, I pass away in being made Great, and, having been made Great, I die.

Being born from out the state of birth-and-death that giveth birth to [mortal] lives, I now, set free, pass to the state transcending birth, as Thou hast stablished it, according as Thou hast ordained and made the Mystery.

COMMENTS.

First we have the Prayer of the Father, who invites the Presence or Glory (Hvarenō as it is called in ancient Persian) of *his* Father, the Great Father of all Fathers, or Supreme Initiator, Mithra the Invincible, to be favourable both to himself and also to his beloved Son who is deemed worthy of having the final secrets imparted to him, so that he in his turn may become a Father.

The highest initiates of the Mithriaca (as of many other mystery-associations of the time) were called the Fathers. They were also called Eagles, and doubtless in Egypt also Hawks, for they had to be born anew as Horus. The sacrament is the mystery of the Birth of Horus in one of its variants; the rite is that of *Athanasía* or Immortality, of

Apothéōsis or Deification or Birth as a God.

The initiates of the next lower grade were called Sons of the Fathers. The tie between them, however, was far stronger than that of human father and child, for it was a spiritual bond; they were their true God-fathers. And these God-fathers of the Mysteries were the true Sons of *their* Father, Mithra Himself, Father of all fatherhood, Master of all masterhood.

This Son has already passed through a long probation and been found worthy of receiving the secret instructions of the Great Act. This Great Act is the Birth of Power, and it is called in the text *Dynamis*, which I have translated Craft. It was a Craft in its highest sense, for it was of the nature of Creative Power.

The Greek *mystērion*, in the sense of an initiatory act, that is to say, an operation which started (*initiare*) new powers in a man, was, since the time of Tertullian, translated in the language of the Western

Church by *sacramentum*, and Dieterich (p. 93) thinks that *dynamis* is a synonym of *sacramentum*. And this particular Dynamis or Craft is a synonym of the Great Work of the Alchemists, as we saw from a quotation from Zosimus in our last volume (p. 48).

Initiation, however, does not mean consummation. An initiation is the starting of things going; it lies with the candidate entirely to make the initiation valid, to seal up the link so to speak. Without this, information will all be vague; there will be retained only vague memories, hints and suspicions.

I am inclined to think that in "Sun Mithra" we have the gloss of an ignorant copyist. Mithra was not the Sun, either in the Iranian religion or in the Mithriac Mysteries; as He is clearly also not the Sun in the rubrics of our Ritual. On the contrary, the Sun is rather the Archangel of Mithra, the Light, and is thus for us the chief mind-power of the Mind of all masterhood.

Speaking in a still more mystical fashion, a Father, as a master, may be said to be one who can stud his own heaven, or great surround, or buddhic substance, with his own stars, or mind-powers. Such a one is capable of being an Initiator into Great Things, or cosmic mysteries. He is capable of projecting his immortality, or super-human power, or ātmic radiance.

Thus an Eagle is one capable of rising into the true Air and looking straight at his own Sun. Such a one does not have to see God reflected in Nature as ordinary man does; he is capable of grasping or understanding the Divine without form. Heaven for such a consciousness is the Great Surround in which all "things"—the things-that-are—are studded as Stars; or to put it otherwise, where every part or portion is a whole or wholeness (to use Platonic terms); they are all "one with another," as Plotinus has it.

II.

A MITHRIAC RITUAL.

We now come to the Ritual proper, and to the first solemn utterance (*logos*) or invocation. The Theurgist invokes his "perfect" or cosmic body, from the depths of his own substance. This is the mystic "enformation according to substance," which is set forth in cosmic terms in the Sophia-mythus or Wisdom-saga of the Christianized Gnosis (*F.F.F.*, 2nd ed., pp. 335, ff.).

General Gnostic tradition teaches that it is by the definite use of all the organs of the body that perfected man is brought into contact with the Great Cosmos, for in a very definite way the body when perfected is a microcosm. We have thus to think of every part of the body possessing sense capable of conveying to consciousness things of an outside and inside world.

1. This great sensitivity is brought about by a transmutation in substance, a rearrangement of atoms so to speak.

The Theurgist, or Operator of the Divine Work, evokes from the depths of his own being his own primal substance or root-plasm, the One Element, differentiated according to the modes of the four cosmic elements—the elements of his mortal body being all permutations of the Earth-element alone; namely, fiery earth, airy earth, watery earth, earthy earth. This Great Four is the Tetraktys of the Pythagoreans—the "Fourfold Root of Everflowing Nature"—in one of its aspects.

It will be noticed that that which brings about this "Blending of the blendings" in him is Fire. This is it which makes him not only of the blending or temperament called man, but also is the means whereby his blending can be transmuted. Five is "God-given," and the chief instrument of the Divine Creator in His fashioning of this fundamental body, the One Body of the man that can be transformed into any shape.

It is probable that the "Honoured

Arm and Incorruptible Right Hand" is not purely a figure of speech, but belongs to a precise symbolism. I am somewhat tempted to connect this "Arm" with the "Shoulder of the Calf" (which comes later on in the Ritual), typifying the seven "pole-lords," the servants of the Pivot on which all things turn. It is He who makes the spheres revolve, and turns all things upon the cosmic lathe, or potter's-wheel.

This "fashioning" of substance, is not the splitting up of matter into geometrical forms, but far more fundamental, and is therefore done in a world that is prior to differentiated light and life as we know it.

"N. N., son of N.N. (fem.)" signify that here must be inserted the names of the candidate and of his mother. The mention of the name of his mother and not father is remarkable. No women were admitted unto the Mithriaca; the women were initiated into the associated Mysteries of the Magna Mater, or Great Mother.

2. He now prays to the great powers of his Single Body, his Wholeness, his Cosmic Vesture, his Sun-barque, his Pegasus, to translate him from Death to Life, from appearance to reality, from Darkness to Light. The bonds of the prisoner are at last to be freed; the "knot" of personality in the "heart" (as the Upaniṣhads phrase it) is to be unloosed; the man is no longer to be a "Procession of Fate," but is to set his foot upon the Spheres of Fate, and make them the Wheels of his Chariot, free in Air.

Fate, Insistent Need, Necessity, Death, is what a Buddhist or a Brāhman ordinarily means by Karma. Elsewhere in the Ritual it is called "bitter." It is the Bitterness, which constricts, which presses on one, the power of gravity, of condensation.

And here we may note a phrase from a mystic cosmogony of the early centuries:

"Through the Bitterness of God, there appeared Mind . . . that restrains the heart, and was called Hermes."

Also compare the Hymn at the end of the J. source of the Naassene Document, where speaking of the wandering "deer," the human soul, it says :

"Far from Thy Breath away she wanders !
She seeks to flee the bitter Chaos,
And knows not how she shall escape."

And again, from a document of the Christianized Sethian Gnosis :

"He (the Light-spark) was a Ray from Above, from that Perfect Light, overpowered in the sinuous and awesome and bitter and blood-stained Water."

And yet again for one of the Orations of the Emperor Julian, who was both initiate into our Mysteries and also knew the Hellenized Mago-Chaldæan Oracles :

"The Oracles of the Gods declare that through purification not only our soul but also our bodies are judged worthy of being greatly helped and preserved, for it is said in them : 'The mortal vesture of bitter matter is preserved.'"

(For references see index of *T.G.H.*).

This is just what the utterance of our Candidate tells us (c. 3); not only is he judged worthy in other respects, but he has made the human "soul-power" or soul-plasm in him to "subsist for a little while in purity." He has "created a nucleus"; he is "with pure purities now purified." And this purity enables him to contact the pure and unmixed elements. We must have something in us of a similar nature before we can become conscious of the things-that-are. For as the verse of Empedocles has it:

"By earth we Earth perceive; by water, Water;
By æther, godly Æther; and by fire, the unseen Fire."

It is thus he is to be "reborn in Mind," by means of the Great Breath of Life and Light—terms which occur over and over again in the mystical Trismegistic sermons. This and this only is the true Initiation.

Thus will he see the Great Mysteries

in their true nature : the Holy Fire ; the Deep of the New Dawn and the Water of Life ; the All-surrounding Æther that will give him cosmic hearing, when his Single Body becomes all-ear.

As the Initiate in the Trismegistic "Virgin of the World" treatise says (c. 4):

"But when the Sun did rise for me, and with all-seeing eyes I gazed upon the hidden mysteries of that New Dawn."

The Deep of the New Dawn is the real substance of true Mind ; and Dawn suggests the rising of the Sun or Ātman above the horizon of the lower mind, so that you begin to see into the depths of Mind.

The Holy Breath breathing in the man is the first stirring of his true Air-body. That is to say, the substance of the Single Body becomes as it were sponge-like, so that the cosmic Air can inter-penetrate it ; the man has within himself a link between himself and Greater Air, a new Airy sense or "centre," which is also a great circumference.

We can only understand, enjoy or really grasp a thing if we possess a fraction of it already; it is only thus we can experience. Even to get ideas about a thing (which is other than experiencing) it is necessary at least to possess within normal consciousness something to correspond to the conception that is being shown us.

3. "Deathless eyes"; the eye is symbolical of mind, and the deathless mind is the higher mind. Compare the great verse of Manilius (iv. 905):

"He stands alone upright; and, Victor,
Sends forth his starry eyes unto the Stars."

The "Might of Mighty Power" is the Power of Ātman, whereby the man is to behold the Deathless Æon, Eternity, the Lord of time and space, and Supreme Creator, the Master of the Diadems of Fire. These Diadems of Fire are foreshadowings of the ordered constellations that will be ranged round the man's Heaven, his Great Surround or Envelope.

They are Fiery, all Fires and Flames, Rays and Brilliance, creative powers like archangels.

The beginning of this Greatness is already within him "subsisting in purity"; that is perhaps in a state of tranquillity or equilibrium, not conceiving any form.

4. "The golden sparklings of the Brilliancy that knows no Death" is a beautiful phrase. It is always difficult to say precisely what these mystic phenomena may denote, for they can be regarded from so many points of view; but keeping within the range of interpretation we have chosen, the phrase may be said to suggest that the man has already attained to a stage when he can, to a limited extent, at any rate, project his "fiery current" and watch it fly forth as myriad sparks of Brilliancy, and thus light up and make apparent to himself his own world-body. But he cannot follow with that part of consciousness which brings with it full sensation. We

may watch and know a great deal about a thing, but we do not really master it, till we fully experience it and thus make it become us.

5. The body is now reduced to absolute quietude before the mystic breathing is begun. No longer is the man to breathe as a mortal ; he is to take into his inmost self deep draughts from the Divine Air. He is to breathe as a Son of God.

Compare with this the following utterance from a Ritual of the Gnostic Heracleonitæ :

" I, the Son from the Father, the Father Pre-existing, but the Son in present existence, came to behold all things—things both other than my own and of my own ; yet things not altogether other than my own, but of Achamōth (Wisdom), the Mother who is female, and made them for herself. But I derive my Race from the Pre-existing, and I am going back unto my own whence I have come."

(See my *World-Mystery*, 2nd ed., p. 60).

III.

A MITHRIAC RITUAL.

1. We now come to the first instruction or practical directions.

Now in the Great Work there is what may be termed a projection and an establishing. What are called the "fires" of the body are definitely used to project consciousness forth into the greater Air. Fire is thus used for the first projection forth; but the fire is the man's Life-fire, and in projecting it he uses his own bodily organs, for within the physical body lie dormant all the necessary organs for contacting the cosmos.

To this side of the mystery our Ritual does not refer; it deals with the use of Breath and for similar purposes. Breath is as it were a spouse of the Fire which has already been projected. That is to say, the Ritual is intended only for those who have already made themselves ready; they must be "worthy of this our Craft."

Fire has to do with what we may call the "Spark"-side of things, the masculine

creative fire. After the implanting of each "Light-spark," as the Christian Gnosis phrases it, there is what may be called a feminine descent, or a further "clothing" and freeing of the imprisoned "Spark," for this clothing is a "robe of power."

Thus one "Spark," and we have the mineral kingdom; this clothed upon by the feminine descent or life-outpouring gives birth to the vegetable kingdom. Two "Sparks" bring into existence the animal kingdom; and this multiplied by the feminine descent gives birth to man. Beyond this there is a third "Sonship" of Fire, and a third descent of the Great Breath—the Ātmic mystery.

Breath is in a sense the reverse of Fire. The one dries the substance, the other causes the drying to cease and establishes the buddhic plasm with a certain definite capacity for holding together; it is no longer watery.

It is to be noted that the Theurgist has to keep touch with his physical body

all the time; he goes forth, yet he remains—it is the mystery of emanation.

The operation is to be effected in sun-light. The man breathes into his body that which dwells within every ray of sun-light; by means of this "breath" he gets into touch with the soul of each ray. After thus breathing in a special way as deeply as possible three times, he begins to feel himself get light (in weight). This feeling is said to be experienced at the back of the head. The man then feels himself as it were rising in the air.

2. He then begins to see a different order of things, which are in our Ritual set forth symbolically according to the tradition of the school. These appearances will differ according to the mind-content of the man.

3. Whatever be the forms, the ascending and descending Gods are in any case the man's own soul-powers forth and in.

The Vision would seem to be the casting of the shadow of himself,—of his

inmost body, and the ordering of it according to the scheme of the cosmos in his mind,—on to the mirror of true cosmic substance.

The next sentence seems to suggest that after he has projected his Fire forth, which is the first initiation of himself into his own world-substance, he begins to see his own Disk. It is the Father's Disk; that is to say, from one point of view, it is the field of consciousness of his Great Person, or Higher Self, who is the father of the little person or mortal personality. But although the Higher Self is our Father, and in a sense we are born from him, we have mystically down here to "create" our own Great Person if we would have any conscious relationship with him.

The "Way-of-going of the Gods" suggests that there now opens up before his sight some plan or scheme of things, of all the many soul-powers.

4. The true interpretation of symbols depends upon the capacity of the learner

to make them alive, and to see them from as many points of view as possible. All true symbols should first of all be made solid, then made interpenetrable, then made alive, in-breathing and out-breathing.

The natural breathing through one nostril for two hours, succeeded by a breathing through the other for a similar period, is a well ascertained fact, and a common-place in treatises on *haṭha yoga*. This, however, is but a reflection of a great law, which is set forth symbolically in our text. Mystically the Pipe is the central "tube" of life, whether we regard the great body as a great atom in-breathing and out-breathing, or each small atom as of a similar nature, the whole system been polarised by the relation of these "tubes" or "pipes" to one another. It is through this Pipe that the true cosmic currents of Fire, Air, Water, and Earth can pass without killing the man. As they pass through this Pipe the man who is initiated,

becomes possessed of the power of whichever cosmic element is playing through him. This Pipe is also a Pole or Axis or Pivot, and is connected with his Great Person or Higher Self.

In a very extended interpretation of the symbols, "East" would signify the Cosmic Power playing forth towards birth, and "West" the return journey back to the Greatness.

5. This seems to indicate the watching of the man's own universe of gods or soul-powers—the powers of his Higher Self, and also, from another point of view, perhaps the essence, so to speak, of such of his past lives as are worthy of immortality; as he watches them, they gaze intently on him and draw near.

The "laying the dexter finger on the lips" reminds us of the well-known figure of Harpocrates, the symbol of silence. Harpocrates (Ḥeru-p-khart), Horus the Younger or the Child, symbolized the young man-god, or super-man;

he was a form of the Rising Sun, of which the Egyptians distinguished seven aspects.

IV.

The visions that now present themselves to the inner eye of the initiate are of so sublime a nature that he cannot hold himself steady, but is shaken, or "moved wholly," as the Christian Mystery Ritual has it (*Hymn of Jesus*, p. 36), and the appearances are consequently blurred and appear inimical.

These and similar visions of initiation are referred to by classical writers variously as: figures or schemas, the technical term for the appearances of the Gods; blessed apparitions and beatific visions; mystic sights and wonders; what is most beautiful to see in the world; holy appearances; sacred shows; ineffable and divine apparitions. (See my "Notes on the Eleusinian Mysteries," *Theo. Rev.*, xxii, 156, note).

Tranquillity and equilibrium, and with them the restored benignity of the appearances, are obtained by the solemn invocation of Silence (Sigē), the Supernal Mother of all things, and Spouse of the Divine.

While the lower nature of the man would utter this as an invocation, the higher would issue it as a command,—a powerful utterance, or word of power,—to stop what appear as hurricanes, so to speak, to one who is experiencing such new forces for the first time.

When a man first becomes conscious in his world-body things are naturally somewhat tumultuous, and this *mantra* is used to protect himself, so to speak, from his own gods, or world-powers, and it brings down the power of his own Great Person who dwells in silence.

As the Heathen commentator of the Naassene Document says :

"This same Man the Phrygians also call Papa ; for He calmed all things which, prior to His own manifestation,

were in disorderly and inharmonious movement.

"For the name Papa is the Sounding-of-all-things-together in Heaven and on Earth, and beneath the Earth, saying: 'Calm, Calm' the discord of the cosmos." (*T. G. H.*, i., 172).

But the greater disturbance takes place in the physical body; and as it is absolutely essential that this should be kept steady, so that the link of memory be not broken, physical means are resorted to in order to restore its equilibrium.

I have hesitated long before adopting the translations of "hiss" and "puff" for the Greek terms. I feel fairly sure about the "hiss," for the sibilant s's are added; but the precise meaning of the second word escapes me. It would seem to mean that in the one case the breath is expelled continuously, and in the other there is an expulsion of breath that is broken by a series of short "puffs"; it may be what has been called the "cleansing breath" in yoga-breathing.

Curiously enough a friend of mine who has passed through some mystic experiences of a somewhat similar nature, was given as a *mantra* what sounded like the English phrase "Cheer up!" But this was to be pronounced in a special way, *Cheeeeee*—which is very similar to "hissing forth long"; then a very distinctly rolled *r*, with a very distinct explosion for the *up*—which is not so far from the "pop" in *poppysmos*.

With regard to such sounds it may be of interest to remind the reader of the otherwise strange expression in the *Book of the Coming-forth by Day*, the "hissing" and "clucking" of the "Great Cackler"—the Great Bird or Mother who hatches forth the eggs of men.

Having regained his attention and with it a clean and clear field of vision, a deeper "shaking" than that of sight

takes place, which he hears as a roar as of thunder. The substance of his world-body is being moved by the very root-sounds of nature

VI.

1. Again he utters "Silence!" This he follows with the great declaration: "I am a Star"—an Æon. With this compare the utterance of the Orphic initiate:

"Child am I of Earth and Starry Heaven; nay, my Race is Heaven's [alone]!"

These words are from a portion of an ancient Orphic Ritual, on a gold tablet, which had been rolled up and placed in a hexagonal cylinder, hanging from a gold chain. It was found in a grave at Petelia, in Southern Italy, and is now in the British Museum. Gold Ornament Room (Table-Case H.).

"Shining anew from out the Depth" seems to mean that in his resurrection he rises out of the Watery Spheres, the

Great Ocean of Change and Becoming, and shines forth as a Sun, an Æon, an Eternity.

The Disk is the Inner Door, that leads to the True Heaven. And so we find Zosimus, the Pœmandrist, writing:

"But Hermes and Zoroaster have said the Race of Wisdom-lovers is superior to Fate [the Watery Realms], by their neither rejoicing in her favours—for they have mastered pleasures—nor by their being struck down by her ills,—for ever living at the Inner Door." (*T.G.H.*, iii. 274).

Again the early Jewish Commentator in the Naassene Document writes:

"This is the Entrance, and this is the Gate, which Jacob saw, when he journeyed into Mesopotamia."

This a later Christian Gnostic commentator explains as the "passing from childhood to puberty and manhood"—the time of the first initiation of a candidate for the Egyptian priesthood. And the Jewish mystic continues:

"And Mesopotamia is the Stream of Great Ocean flowing from the Middle of the Perfect Man." (*T.G.H.*, i. 171.).

This was the Gate of the Lesser Mysteries; but when the Pagan Mystic speaks of the Greater Mysteries, our Jewish Gnostic continues:

"This Mystery is the Gate of Heaven, and this is the House of God, where the Good God dwells alone; into which House no impure man shall come. But it is kept under watch for the Spiritual alone; where when they come, they must cast away their garments, and all become bridegrooms, obtaining their true manhood through the Virginal Spirit.

"For this is the Virgin big with child, conceiving and bearing a Son—a blessed Æon of Æons." (*T.G.H.*, i. 181.).

The man now so to speak begins to enter into himself. The Disk seems to expand and the myriad hosts of heaven in angelic form seem to people all space; until he again becomes confused at the marvels of the heavenly panorama, the

celestial bioscope of his own nature. He therefore stops the vision with another utterance of "Silence."

3. He thus finds himself in his own Great Sphere, which he no longer sees as an objective Disk, but which has now become himself or the field of his consciousness. There is an Infinite Encircling and yet again Doors of Fire, "fast closed."

He is now substantially at one with his Great Person or Higher Self, and these Doors of Creative Fire will, when they are opened, introduce him to his Fellow-Greatnesses. Though the Candidate has risen into his own Great Body he is not yet in direct touch with the Cosmos, any more than a baby is in touch with the physical world the moment he is born, though he has the necessary vehicle.

The Candidate is now born into his cosmic vehicle; he has the powers of his world-sphere properly ordered, but his senses *forth* into the cosmos are closed.

He must now close his eyes. That is

to say, he must not be too interested in his new world-body; he must close his eyes to it, and try to go forth again, and use the mighty sphere as a vehicle only, as a "single eye" in the world of the Gods.

VII.

1. Thereon follows a magnificent invocation to the Æon, his own Ātman, who is all opposites, male-female and the rest. The Breath is the feminine power of Ātman which has bestowed on him his world-body, has closed him in and given him a Great Surround, a true Air-body. The praise of the might of the Æon should be compared with the description of the symbolical image of the Æon given in out last small volume (pp. 70, ff.).

2. I have retained this specimen of magical chanting to give the reader some idea of one mode of theurgic language. The vowels are all open flowing sounds, are all feminine; there are no consonants

or masculine arrestings to cut these great waves of sound up into forms. The sounds can interpenetrate each other and stir the deepest substance.

The throat is opened and the breath is allowed to come forth in different "shapes" — "shapes," not forms; "shapes" may be said to be more fundamental than forms. The breath must be sent forth without contacting any organs, so to speak, without being cut up by the tongue or lips or teeth, just shaped by the shape of the throat, root-sounds, so to say.

The Candidate is trying to get outside or beyond his own Great Person (though indeed he moves not), and so link himself on with other Great Personæ. You can only get out of yourself, it is said, by attaching yourself to someone else.

3. Perhaps the sevenfold utterance means that the utterance has to be chanted or intoned in seven keys.

The root-sounds on the physical plane, issuing from the depths of the body, but

without contact with the organs of articulate speech, sympathetically induce changes which are, so to speak, the way-forth out of the man's world-surround. The inner spiritual power, or Fire, goes forth at first unconsciously without Breath; so there must be chanting if consciousness is to accompany the man, and he would still keep hold of his physical body.

These root-sounds play upon the great surround, and then the man begins to hear real cosmic sounds, such as a Voice that roars with a roar of thunder all round the sphere; yet though it utters one sound only it means all the world to the fortunate hearer. It means whatever he may choose to turn his attention to, and can teach him anything he may desire; for it is Intelligence. This Voice causes his whole world-body to tremble.

4. The spiritual Doors are thus again thrown open. He has, as it were, shattered his world-body, or risen above it, to use it and not dwell within it.

The Beatific Vision bursts upon him. His true Spirit or Consciousness runs out of his sphere, through the energizing of Ātman, and goes forth to meet Cosmic Consciousness.

He has now to retain his individuality no longer by means of any body or surround, but by steady attention, by gazing at the Spark of his Divinity. Thus he becomes a conscious Spiritual Atom in God, and he draws Breath or a new mode of Consciousness from the Divine, beyond even his own Great Person or Higher Self.

VIII.

1. He now receives consciously the Third Spark, his Highest Self.

The invocation "Draw nigh, O Lord" reminds us of perhaps the most magnificent passage in Plotinus which describes the secret of his ecstasy.

"Let there, then, be in the soul some semblance of a sphere of light transparent,

having all things in it, whether moving or still, and some of them moving and others still.

"And, holding this sphere in the mind, conceive in thyself another sphere, removing from it all idea of mass; take from it also the idea of space, and the phantom of matter in thy mind; and do not try to image another sphere merely less in mass than the former.

"Then invoking God who hath made that true sphere, of which thou holdest the phantom in thy mind, pray that He may come.

"And may He come with His own cosmos, with all the Gods therein—He being one and all, and each one all, united into one, yet different in their powers, and yet, in that one power of multitude, all one." (*T.G.H.*, i. 252.).

IX.

Thus His Rays are turned upon the man, and a new Golden Splendour becomes

his, or he becomes it, or is magnified into the Greatness. He has thus a new link with the Divine; he is in the midst of this Splendour or Flame which wraps itself round him—that is to say, his great sphere—like a serpent in seven coils, as in the symbolic image of the Æon; it is no longer only potential in him, but actual.

The description in the text is a symbolic portrayal of what we have previously referred to as the Third Spark—or Christ, the Serpent of Wisdom.

X.

1. The man thus prays to be brought unto the Father by this the true Son and the Spirit of the Sun.

It seems to mean that a great change has now been consummated, and that the lesser differentiated ātmic "sparks," which he has previously seen unordered or potential in his nature, as atoms of spiritual essence, that this potential spirit,

or these atoms of spirit, have by the Presence of the Glory and the Flame united into a true living five-fold Star; he has risen upon ātmic spirituality into being a Spirit. The five-fold is of the nature of Mind.

3. "Upon this utterance He shall come to the Pole." However this may be taken astrologically, or according to the schema of the theurgical astronomy of the adyta of those days, the Pole for the true mystic can only mean the man's own Pole, that is his Great Person, or Higher Self, that which in his lower cosmos "has stood, stands and will stand"—his individuality. From the point of view of substance and of symbolic vision, this can be equated with the Heaven-Pole, the Pivot "on which all doth turn." But in this subjective-objective vision the truth is reversed. The God does not really move round on a path; it is He who is the True One "who stands." It is the æonic, or the "starry" body of the man, the *augoeides*

or *astroeides*, that turns on this Pivot as on an axis, in a course that is now as the course of his fellow Stars.

3. In order to keep pace with the power of the Great Experience through which the Epopt is passing, a new and deeper mode of breath is to be practised physically, so that the link with the physical body may be retained. But this mode of breath is perhaps rather etheric than physical; it is not exactly a physical alteration which could be detected outwardly, for ordinary breathing may go on all the time.

Nor do I think it necessary in connection with this "bellowing," to refer to the sacred instrument called the "bull-roarer"—used in the mystery-cults of certain primitive peoples, in New Mexico, Australia, New Zealand and Africa, to summon the "God" or announce his coming, and upon which no woman may look and live. I need only remark that it evidently typifies an instrument of virile power.

In yoga,—and our Ritual before all else is a yoga-rite,—the "bellowing" must be connected with the "power of the bull," or creative power, the use of which for spiritual operations constituted the greatest secret of the Mithriaca.

In the *prāṇayāma* (or restraint of the breath) practices in yoga, the internal "bellowing" would connote the result of drawing the deepest breath possible and causing it to vibrate or throb or roar, and so press on, or set going, certain centres.

These centres are the "amulets" proper; but in ceremonial magic physical phylacteries were used, and placed on the corresponding external centres.

The "bellowing" is in Greek the utterance of the sound "*moo*"—and this is in some sort an inversion of the sacred syllable *oṁ*.

XI.

This operation if successfully accomplished will open out the consciousness still further. The imagery and symbolism

are doubtless derived from Egyptian tradition, superimposed on Chaldæan astral doctrine.

It is to be noticed that the Seven Virgins are called: "Ye holiest Protectors of the Four Supports." With this compare the Mystic Ritual of the Baptism of the Water of Life in the *Book of the Great Logos*, where the Master and Saviour (Aberamenthō) utters the following prayer, prefixed with an invocation in the mystery-tongue, interspersed with triple Amens:

"Hear Me, My Father, Father of all fatherhood, Boundless Light, Who art in the Treasure of Light! May the Supporters come, who serve the Seven Virgins of Light who preside over the Baptism of Life! May they come and baptize My disciples with the Water of Life of the Seven Virgins of Light, and wash away their sins and purify their iniquities, and number them among the heirs of the Kingdom of Light!" (*F.F.F.*, 2nd ed., 525.).

And Proclus (*In Tim.*, ii. 137 B; Schneid. 323), with regard to Phanēs—whom he calls the "All-perfect Living One," and characterizes as the Paradigmatic or Intelligible Cause, that is the Logos—tells us that the Theologist (*sci.* Orpheus) sings of Him as alone "bearing the glorious seed of the Gods," implanted by the Hidden Deity. And from Phanēs is derived the secondary ordering of the Gods, as supports of the primary. Thus the true Heaven and the true Earth proceed as an intelligible unity—Father-Mother. And She, the true Heavenly Mother, "She in her turn gave birth to the extended [primal] Heaven and Earth"—that is, extended in space. And then Kronos unites with Rhea; at the third birth, this Earth, the Mother, brought forth again:

"Seven Virgins fair, bright-eyed and pure, and Seven kingly and down-covered Youths."

It is to be noticed that this vision presents itself after the Doors are thrown

open for the third time; that is after the third great change of consciousness on the return journey.

It is also to be noticed that the Virgins carry the gold in their hands and the Youths wear it on their heads. They are the children of the Mother-side of things and the progeny of the Lord of the Pole, Kronos or the Æon, the Great Individuality or Person.

The spouse of Kronos is Rhea. This Mother-substance is in a chaotic or ever-flowing condition (Rhea, from *rhein*, to flow), that is flowing in all directions at once. But when the Third Spark embraces the world-body of the man, his mother-substance becomes differentiated into seven pure elements—seven instead of four, as has previously been the case—that is, with powers of contact with the seven planes of cosmos. The Virgins seem to symbolize the substantial side of things, while the black-faced Youths are poles or pivots, in their turn, cords, supports, or radii. The black faces seem

to symbolize powers turned from the Sun, and going forth on their own account, independent, intelligent.

The One Substance, or Mother-octave, or Ogdoad, has now become seven spheres, all revolving independently, yet in perfect order. The man's Body has been made a perfect correspondence with the Great Cosmos. True cosmic instinct is thus bestowed upon him at this rebirth.

When the Mother-octave is spoken of, it connotes the relationship between the man's world-body and the Great Elements or Cosmos; when the Son-octave is referred to, it indicates how this same world-sphere is linked up with the man's true Person; while the Father-octave suggests that this same world-octave is linked on to a still vaster mystery. And yet it is all one mystery.

In the case of normal man the linking up is with Four and not with Eight or Seven.

XII.

The supreme moment arrives when the man is to meet with Mithra, the Great Initiator, face to face, and gaze upon His Mystery with cosmic senses, the whole of him one sense, and all senses in one.

XIV.

Then is it that the Lord of Fire, or Risen Great Person, the man at-oned with his Higher Self, become now Lord and Ruler, or King, is Master of Water, Earth and Breath. He is Master of Water or all manifestation ; Lord of Earth, or all his personalities ; and King of Breath or all vehicles of consciousness.

It is magnificent, sublime, stupendous. Is it all an empty dream ; or may it be a glorious reality ?

And if there be those who are deterred from accepting the under-meaning, because of the symbolism which arose out

of physical conceptions of the universe which modern science has outgrown, may we venture to suggest that to the deeper mystic consciousness, a heliocentric or a geocentric theory of phenomena is a matter of indifference; both are equally far from the reality, no matter how superior the one may be to the other for purposes of intellectual training.

One has doubtless been over-bold in some of the above speculations; but, after many years of study of the contemporary literature of the Gnosis and the Mysteries, of Theosophy and Theurgy, many things which at first appeared utterly irreconcilable seem somehow now to fall together; ideas unite, symbolism becomes more plastic.

It would, of course, be impossible in so small a compass as this little volume to set forth all the thoughts which so rapidly flash through the mind in meditating on this Ritual, and the many passages that could be quoted in

illustration of the many points of mystic interest that have been touched upon. That would require a long and learned treatise, and this is not the purpose of these booklets.

I have, therefore, simply attempted to set forth the impression that this remarkable Ritual has made upon myself, in the hope that some of my readers may recognise a fellow-feeling in themselves ; and that some day they may be able to say with the Victor made victorious by the Invincible One :

"Being born from out the state of birth-and-death that giveth birth to mortal lives, I now, set free, pass to the state transcending birth, as Thou hast stablished it, according as Thou hast ordained and made the Mystery."

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